



EAB

# Transforming the First Generation College Student Experience

Tactic Implementation Toolkit

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# Empowering Students to Better Navigate the College Experience

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SECTION

1

# Empowering Students to Better Navigate College

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Unfamiliarity with higher education can pose a range of challenges for first generation college students, as they navigate unfamiliar and complex outreach, expectations, and structures, as well as adjust to life on campus. The following tools provide resources to support first generation college students throughout their initial transition to campus.

## Dedicated Getting Started Guide

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First generation college students are inundated with information from the moment they begin their college search. It can be difficult for them to separate what is required verses optional and know where to get more information if they have questions. EAB recommends creating a guide or similar resource to help students navigate important dates, deadlines, and terminology, as well as prioritize next steps. The steps outlined on the following pages will help you identify which information and frequently asked questions are most important to clarify for first generation college students.

### Step 1: Create a student focus group

Involving current first generation students is essential to creating a comprehensive guide for your incoming students. Use the list below to brainstorm offices or organizations on campus that serve a large population of first generation college students and ask them to provide a list of students that they recommend for participation in the focus group. Cross check that list against students who self-identified as first generation college students with the admissions office to ensure that the recommended participants are actually first generation college students. Then use the email template on the following page to reach out to these individuals. Your focus group should have between 6 and 10 participants.

Resource #1: First Generation College Student Organization

Resource #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource #5: \_\_\_\_\_

# Dedicated Getting Started Guide

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## Sample Focus Group Recruitment Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The (office name) is in the process of putting together a guide for incoming freshmen. As you may remember, arriving on campus and getting set up at school can be a confusing and complicated process. We are trying to make that easier by creating a guide that will contain everything students need to know for the first year of college. (Name/Title) recommended that we contact you to help us identify topics to include in the guide.

We hope that you can join us in a focus group on (date, time, location) to share some of the things that you found confusing or complicated when you arrived at school. The guide will be prepared specifically for students whose parents did not graduate from a four year college, so if there are any questions that come to mind that your parents were not able to answer for you or help you with, please feel free to share those at that time.

We hope that you will help us make college easier for incoming students! Please, let us know if you are available by responding to this email by (date) or if you would like to simply email us topics to include in the guide.

Sincerely,

Name

Department

Contact Information

# Dedicated Getting Started Guide

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## **Step 2: Determine questions for focus group discussion**

Before the focus group, brainstorm which questions you will pose to the group to get the richest responses. We have provided a few options on the following page but consider the needs of your students and any specific institutional context when creating your list.

# Dedicated Getting Started Guide

## Focus Group Discussion Guide

Questions	Topics
What did you have the most difficulty with when you first arrived on campus?	
Which office or individual did you find the most helpful in getting acclimated to school?	
Looking back, is there anything you wish you knew before you had arrived at school?	

Source: Adapted from material shared by Georgetown University.

# Dedicated Getting Started Guide

## Step 3: Fill in informational gaps

After the focus group, determine, from your perspective, the highest priority items and requirements that students must complete before or during their arrival on campus and fill in any gaps left by the focus group. Create a list of these items below.

Topic #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #5: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #6: \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 4: Outline necessary information and steps for each topic

After you have compiled a list of topics, determine all of the steps required and questions or barriers that might arise in completing related tasks. Use the sample below as a guide for the worksheet on the following page.

## Sample Getting Started Guide Worksheet

1. Step to complete:	Activate Student Net ID		
What is it?	Why is it important?	What steps are required?	Frequently asked questions
Net ID is a student's university email account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows students to sign up for classes</li> <li>Access student email</li> <li>Register for housing</li> <li>Get their student ID card</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Net ID is emailed to your personal email account and mailed to your house</li> <li>Once it arrives you log onto <a href="http://www.university.edu/IT/NetID/Registration">www.university.edu/IT/NetID/Registration</a> and create a new password</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where do I access my student email? You can access your student email at <a href="http://www.university.edu/studentemail">www.university.edu/studentemail</a>.</li> <li>Can I just keep using my personal email? All official university communication will be sent to your university email some of which is really important, so check it regularly.</li> </ol>

Source: Adapted from material shared by Georgetown University.

# Dedicated Getting Started Guide

## Getting Started Guide Worksheet

1. Step to Complete:			
What is it?	Why is it important?	What steps are required?	Frequently asked questions
2. Step to Complete:			
What is it?	Why is it important?	What steps are required?	Frequently asked questions
3. Step to Complete:			
What is it?	Why is it important?	What steps are required?	Frequently asked questions

Source: Adapted from material shared by Georgetown University.

# Dedicated Getting Started Guide

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**Step 5: Review for higher education jargon**

Use the Higher Ed Terminology Translation Exercise on page 18 to ensure that your publication is accessible to both first generation college students and their families.

**Step 6: Review checklist**

Use the checklist below to review your guide.

Final Checklist for Editing Your Guide:	
	Did you make clear what steps are necessary verses optional?
	Is your text conversational in tone?
	Have you included information about low cost options or explained which services are free?
	Have you included contact information for all referenced offices or services?

Source: Adapted from material shared by Georgetown University.

## Dedicated Getting Started Guide

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### Step 7: Determine if additional translations are necessary

Some institutions serve a large population of students whose parents are non-native English speakers. If this is the case on your campus, you may want to consider creating translated versions of your guide, so that it is more accessible.

### Step 8: Determine best distribution method for your guide

Below are three options for disseminating your guide. Determine which is best for your student population.



#### Option 1: Print and mail

Best for populations with limited access to the internet or populations with parents or caregivers that are not comfortable using the internet. Print only the necessary number of guides in each language in order to save on printing costs.



#### Option 2: Create a PDF of the guide and email

Best for populations that are comfortable using the internet but have limited internet access. This option allows students and their caregivers to download the guide once instead of having to constantly use their cellular data or have available internet access to revisit information in the guide. Since creating a PDF costs nothing, creating guides in other languages should not increase your delivery costs.



#### Option 3: Create an online guide and email the link

This option is only ideal for populations where both students and their parents are comfortable using the internet and internet access is available both at home and while away from home in the form of cellular data. Webpages can be translated using a Google translate link at no cost to over 90 languages using the following link:

<https://translate.google.com/manager/website/>.

## Dedicated Getting Started Guide

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### Step 9: Review with a student group annually

Each year, conduct a student focus group with second-year first generation college students to review and edit the material covered in the guide. You can use the steps outlined previously to revisit what to include. You can also use the questions below to guide your review.

#### Annual Guide Review Questions:

1. What was the most difficult logistical step for you in starting college?
2. What was the most difficult process for you to navigate?
3. Was there anything that was not in the guide that you wish had been included?
4. Are any of these steps outdated?
5. Have any department names or contact people changed?



Complete steps 7 and 8 annually, as demographics will likely shift over time and needs may change.

## Higher Ed Terminology Translation Exercise

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The language that is used in higher education is often complicated and difficult to understand for individuals who are unfamiliar with it. In order to alleviate this problem, higher education institutions should review the materials sent to or often accessed by first generation college students. You should translate the higher education terminology that you use, so that your students can learn terms that will be necessary throughout their college experience.

### Worksheet directions

1. Select the words from the list on the following pages that are used in your materials.
2. Complete the worksheet in a group or alone.
3. Fill in the translation section with a brief and simple definition of each term. (Recommended length: 7-10 words)
4. Use the Gunning Fog Index (GFI) online tool to assess the readability of your translation.  
([www.gunning-fog-index.com](http://www.gunning-fog-index.com))
5. Share group or individual translations with colleagues and determine most suitable, concise, and lowest GFI score translation.
6. Optional: Formalize translations into a handout for all staff, new hires, and even students.

# Higher Ed Terminology Translation Exercise

Tuition and Fees		
Term	Translation	Gunning Fog Index Score (GFI)
Tuition		
Payment Plan		
Tuition Schedule		
Subsidy		
Fee Schedule		
Tuition and Fee Refund		
Withdrawal		
Registration Fee		
Program Eligibility		
Financial Aid		
Academic Year		
Accreditation		
Additional Eligibility		
Adjusted Gross Income		
Associate Degree		
Attending School		
Award Amount		
Award Letter		
Award Year		
Cancellation		
Collection Agency		
Collection Charges		
Cost of Attendance (COA)		
Data Release Number (DRN)		
Default		
Default Rate		
Deferment		
Delinquent		
Dependency Status		
Direct Loan		
Disbursed Amount		
Disbursement		
Discharge		

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

## Higher Ed Terminology Translation Exercise

Financial Aid (cont.)		
Term	Translation	Gunning Fog Index Score (GFI)
Eligible Noncitizen		
Eligible Program		
Enrollment Status		
Entrance Counseling		
Exit Counseling		
Expected Family Contribution (EFC)		
FAFSA		
Federal Pell Grant		
Federal Perkins Loan		
Federal School Code		
Federal Student Aid		
Federal Student Aid PIN		
Federal Student Loan		
Federal Work-Study		
Financial Aid Offer		
Financial Aid Package		
GED		
Grace Period		
Grant		
Guaranteed Student Loans		
Income Tax		
Independent Student		
Interest		
Legal Guardianship		
Lender		
Loan Forgiveness		
Loan Holder		
Loan Services		
Master Promissory Note		
Merit-Based		
Need-Based		
Net Price		
Net Price Calculator		

Source: "Glossary: Financial Student Aid," <https://studentaid.ed.gov/glossary>; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Higher Ed Terminology Translation Exercise

Financial Aid, (cont.)		
Term	Translation	Gunning Fog Index Score (GFI)
Overpayment		
PLUS Loan		
Private Loan		
Promissory Note		
Regular Student		
Repayment Date		
Satisfactory Academic Progress		
Scheduled Award		
Scholarship		
Standardized Test		
Student Aid Report		
Subsidized Loan		
TRIO		
Unsubsidized Loan		
Verification		
Work-Study		
Placement Tests		
Evaluation of Prior Coursework		
COMPASS/ACCUPLACER		
ACT		
Remedial		
Developmental		
Cutoff Score		
Accelerated		
Placement		
Registration		
Registrar		
Elective		
Prerequisite		
Course Load		
Credit Hour		
General Degree Requirement		

Source: "Glossary: Financial Student Aid," <https://studentaid.ed.gov/glossary>; EAB interviews and analysis.

# Higher Ed Terminology Translation Exercise

Additional Terms		
Term	Translation	Gunning Fog Index Score (GFI)
GPA		
Office Hours		

Source: "Glossary: Financial Student Aid," <https://studentaid.ed.gov/glossary>; EAB interviews and analysis.

## Higher Ed Jargon Reduction Exercise

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Despite efforts to help first generation college students learn the terminology we use in institutional communication, college websites and informational materials often contain unnecessary jargon. Once you have identified tricky jargon and inaccessible words using the previous tool, use the following exercise to determine which materials are the highest priority for translation.

### Step 1: Identify commonly used webpages and materials

Ask the information technology staff to identify college webpages with highest volume of traffic. Once you have this list, have each department use the list below to brainstorm all additional student- and parent-facing materials that generate a high volume of in-person traffic to their offices.

Resource #1: Course registration packet

Resource #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource #5: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 2: Complete jargon reduction exercise

Ask staff to assess the materials and webpages they've identified, using the steps below to make communication as clear and accessible as possible.

- 1. Reduce multisyllabic words:** Underline all words with more than two syllables. Identify and replace them with shorter words (even if this requires using multiple words in the place of one multisyllabic word).
- 2. Remove passive voice:** Highlight all language in passive voice; rephrase sentences to be in active voice.
- 3. Group related information:** Condense all text that pertains to the same topic in a specific area and use white space to separate it from information pertaining to another topic.
- 4. Translate jargon:** Use the results from the Higher Ed Terminology Translation Exercise (page 40) to replace jargon (where appropriate) with translations for a non-higher education audience. (This step is especially effective when completed with new employees unfamiliar with higher education jargon.)

### Step 3: Run new text through the Gunning Fog Index

Using the Gunning Fog index to cross-check your work will help ensure that it is truly accessible.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

# Higher Ed Jargon Reduction Exercise

## Example:

✗ Original Text:

### Take the College Placement Test

*After you have been* admitted to the college, you must take the **college placement test**. Schedule your test by going to [www.eabcc.edu](http://www.eabcc.edu) or by calling. If *you have* successfully completed a **college-level** English or math course from another college or have taken EABCC placement testing at an earlier date, you may qualify for an **exemption** from all or part of the test. In order to be **eligible** to participate in a specific academic program and/or enroll in **credit classes**, students must achieve a **minimum score** of 33 out of 120 on the reading portion of the test.

Key:

*Passive Voice*

**Jargon**

Multisyllabic

**Gunning Fog Index Score: 12.65**

✓ Revised Text:

### Take the College Placement Test

If you are an admitted student, you must take a test that measures what classes you are ready to take, called "Placement Tests." It's important to prepare for this test because it could impact how fast you can graduate if you place into classes that do not count towards your degree. To enroll in classes that do count towards your degree, you need score at least 33 out of 120 on the reading section.

You'll need an appointment to take the test. You should schedule it by going to [www.eabcc.edu](http://www.eabcc.edu) or by calling (XXX-XXX-XXXX).

There are two reasons you may not need to take the test.

- 1) If you completed and passed an English or math course for college credit at another school
- 2) If you took the placement test at EABCC in the past

**Gunning Fog Index Score: 8.79**

# Student-Staffed One-Stop Resolution Center

First generation college students’ ability to thrive is often hindered by roadblocks that would only be a minor inconvenience for continuing generation students. To help students through these issues, some colleges have trained a team of advocates to guide students through finding a resolution. These services provide a central resource that students can use to get all of their questions answered in one place, by student advocates.

## Component 1: Create a robust student training program

Students are often more comfortable going to a peer to ask questions then they are going to an administrator. Using students can also help keep costs lower. The following steps will help you establish a robust training program to ensure that your student employees are prepared to help students with complex and sensitive questions.

### Step 1: Identify necessary certifications, compliance, and sensitivity training

Your university, local, state, and federal laws may require that students who are employed in a position that potentially deals with sensitive information go through certain training or attain certain certifications. Speak with your legal department and brainstorm any additional trainings that will prepare students to handle sensitive information correctly. Use the chart below to list the trainings that you should include in student employee training.

## Student Employee Training and Certification Requirements

Training/Certification	Topics Covered
FERPA	Laws governing the sharing of student academic records

Source: Adapted from material shared by Eastern Kentucky University.

# Student-Staffed One-Stop Resolution Center

## Step 2: Create tutoring and study skills guidelines

Your university learning center may already have guidelines for tutoring or study skills. This is a great opportunity to either partner with this office or request training from them that will adequately prepare and certify students to tutor in a variety of subjects.

## Step 3: Outline important campus resources

Your staff needs to be knowledgeable about existing campus resources and offices in order to answer student questions. Identify the resources that your staff will likely use for referrals and introduce them to their services.

## Component 2: Establish a help center

One of the unique components of this program is the central location on campus that students can go to with any question. Use the following steps to establish your centralized help center.

### Step 1: Find a central campus location

Work with your department and the facilities department to identify available spaces on campus, existing lounges, or computer labs that can be utilized for the program, if not full-time, perhaps during certain hours.

Students should feel comfortable at your help center. Establishing a welcoming environment that students want to spend time in will also help encourage students to use your services. Some suggestions include: low lighting, loud music, snacks, and comfortable seating.

### Step 2: Create a centralized information system

In order to ensure that all student workers who staff the center are able to answer all student questions, you must create a centralized database of updates for the staff to input department updates and gather information from other staffers. This can be as simple as an online wiki or a more robust system with search functions. Below is an overview of both options.



#### Option 1: Centralized wiki page

##### Pros:

- Easy to maintain
- Low start-up and maintenance costs
- Technology may already exist at your university
- Little student employee training required

##### Cons:

- Can be difficult to organize
- Limited search functions



#### Option 2: Database

##### Pros:

- Robust search function
- Multiple information organization options
- Technology may already exist at your university

##### Cons:

- High start-up and maintenance costs
- More training required

Source: Adapted from material shared by Eastern Kentucky University.

# Student-Staffed One-Stop Resolution Center

### Step 3: Determine hiring process

It is crucial that these students can not only speak authoritatively to a range of student issues and concerns, but also that they are warm, easy to approach, and personable. It is important to screen for these qualities during the hiring process. You may be able to use existing hiring processes from other student affairs departments such as residence life. Below is a partial checklist of soft skills to consider while interviewing applicants.

### Soft Skills Checklist

	Skill
	Does the candidate display a personable demeanor?
	Has the candidate demonstrated an ability to be humble?
	Does the candidate have any experience handling sensitive information with appropriate discretion?

Source: Adapted from material shared by Eastern Kentucky University

# Student-Staffed One-Stop Resolution Center

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## Component 3: Track student use and outcomes

In order to justify the cost of staffing and space, your program should diligently track student use and outcomes. Use the guidelines below to make an annual or semester review possible with minimal effort.

### Step 1: Establish student use tracking system

Tracking the number of students who use your services is a great way to start. However, EAB recommends going one step further and tracking which students use your services, so that you can compare outcomes, for example the GPA of students who use your service versus the students who do not. Below are two recommended options for tracking.



#### Option 1: Simple spreadsheet tracking

Create a centralized spreadsheet that is accessible by student employees. You can utilize an excel spreadsheet, Google docs, or a secure online spreadsheet system. Make sure that the spreadsheet is locked to keep student information secure. Have employees input basic information into the spreadsheet, such as student name, ID number, date of visit, and purpose of visit.



#### Option 2: Automatic ID card scanner

This technology may be available on your campus already. This system will enable your staff to scan student IDs and automatically gather basic information into a centralized tracking system upon each visit. Then student employees can enter the date and reason for the visit.

### Step 2: Conduct an annual assessment

Determine meaningful metrics by which to evaluate your efforts. Track these measures annually or by semester to measure your impact and progress towards program goals. The next page presents a partial list to of metrics to consider using.

# Student-Staffed One-Stop Resolution Center

## One-Stop Resolution Center Assessment Metrics

Student Use Metrics	Outcome Metrics	Efficiency Metrics
Number of student visits	Average semester GPA	Average time spent per student visit
Number of tutoring sessions	Average GPA point increase	Average number of help sessions per employee shift
	Fall to fall retention	

Source: Adapted from material shared by Eastern Kentucky University

## Parent's First-Year Experience Seminar

The parents of first generation college students are very interested in being involved and supporting their students, however, many are unsure of how college works and therefore, how to be a resource for their student. Many colleges offer a first-year experience course that provides a comprehensive overview of the student experience in the first year. Condensing a course like this into a seminar for parents is an easy way to allow parents to learn about the student experience at an orientation or pre-orientation session, enabling them to be active in their children's college experience.

### Step 1: Prioritize curriculum for adaption

Use the following sample and guide to prioritize which curriculum components to include in your parents seminar.

### Sample Curriculum Prioritization Worksheet

Curriculum Component	Aspect of First Year Experience Highlighted	Relation to Student Experience	Priority for Inclusion in Parents Seminar
1. Academic experience overview	Choosing a program of study	High	High
	Officially declaring a program of study	High	Medium
	Timelines for declaring a program of study	High	High
2. Time management & personal wellness	Overview of student health center offerings	Medium	Medium
	Mental health services on campus	Medium	Medium
	Creating a study schedule	High	High
	Managing long-term class deadlines	High	Medium
3. Extra-curricular involvement	The importance of involvement	High	High
	How to join a club	Medium	Medium
	Becoming a club officer	Low	Low

Source: Adapted from material shared by Fayetteville State University.

# Parent’s First-Year Experience Seminar

## Curriculum Prioritization Worksheet

Curriculum Component	Aspect of First Year Experience Highlighted	Relation to Student Experience	Priority for Inclusion in Parents Seminar
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Source: Adapted from material shared by Fayetteville State University.

## Parent's First-Year Experience Seminar

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### Step 2: Consider timing, delivery channel, and format of the session

Below are some recommendations for planning your parents' seminar.

- ✓ If your seminar takes place during orientation or a similar day-long, multi-session event, select a time slot that does not conflict with other high-priority sessions, such as financial aid or other general parent sessions.
- ✓ Remember that not everyone works typical work hours or has paid-time off available. If past parent sessions have had low turnout, consider offering an online, interactive session or an archived recording of the session.
- ✓ Explore different format options. If your parents tend to have a lot of questions, perhaps a question and answer panel would be best. Alternatively, parents may be uncomfortable asking questions in a group environment, in which case a speaker with a presentation might be more effective.

## Student Experience Focused Newsletters

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Sending parent newsletters is a relatively standard practice. The parents of first generation college students, however, want information that focuses on what their students are going through and how they can support them, little of which is found in standard parent newsletters. The exercise below will guide you through enhancing your current newsletters to provide better guidance and relevant information the parents of first generation college students.

### Step 1: Identify student experience related updates

Begin by identifying previous newsletter topics, significant events, milestones, and calendar dates related to the student experience that you would like to feature. Some common topics might include the student health center, winter break, flu season, and midterms. You may decide to include topics unique to your campus, particularly if a significant number of students are impacted by them.

Topic #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic #5: \_\_\_\_\_

# Student Experience Focused Newsletters

## Step 2: Explain the relevance of the topic

For each of the topics you listed in step one, briefly explain what its impact is on the student experience. Use the table and the examples provided below to develop your own list.

Topic	Impact on Student Experience
Midterms	Midterms can be an extremely stressful time for students. They often have more than one exam on the same day, within a two week period.
Flu season	

Source: Adapted from material shared by University of Missouri.

# Student Experience Focused Newsletters

**Step 3: Identify relevant campus resources for each topic**

For each of the topics you listed in step two, identify two to four related campus resources. Use the table and the examples provided below to develop your own list.

Topic	Related Resources
Midterms	<div><div>1.</div><div>University learning center</div></div> <div><div>2.</div><div>Professor office hours</div></div> <div><div>3.</div><div></div></div> <div><div>4.</div><div></div></div>
Flu Season	<div><div>1.</div><div>Student health center</div></div> <div><div>2.</div><div>Free flu shots</div></div> <div><div>3.</div><div></div></div> <div><div>4.</div><div></div></div>

Source: Adapted from material shared by University of Missouri.

# Student Experience Focused Newsletters

## Step 4: Prepare related talking points for each resource

Help parents be a resource for their students. For each of the resources you listed above, create two to three talking points for parents to use in discussing the topic or resource with their student. Use the table and the examples provided below to develop your own list.

Resource	Talking Points
University learning center	<div>1. The university learning center offers free walk-in tutoring, 7 days per week.</div> <div>2. _____</div> <div>3. _____</div>
Professor office hours	<div>1. Every professor is required to offer at least 4 office hours per week. These are times that students can go in to ask them questions about their assignments, class, or the university in general. Encourage your student to meet with each of their professors at least once per semester during office hours!</div> <div>2. _____</div> <div>3. _____</div>

Source: Adapted from material shared by University of Missouri.

# Student Experience Focused Newsletters

## Step 5: Review your newsletters for accessibility

As you use the information from the last four steps to compose your parent newsletter updates, use the checklist below to ensure that you have made your newsletter accessible for your parent readers.

Final Checklist for Editing Your Newsletter:	
	Did you avoid using higher education jargon?
	Does your newsletter rate below an 8.7 on the Gunning Fog Index?
	Is your text conversational in tone?
	Have you included information about low cost options or explained which services are free?

Source: Adapted from material shared by University of Missouri.





# Highlighting Positive Identity-Based Messaging

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SECTION

2

# Highlighting Positive Identity-Based Messaging

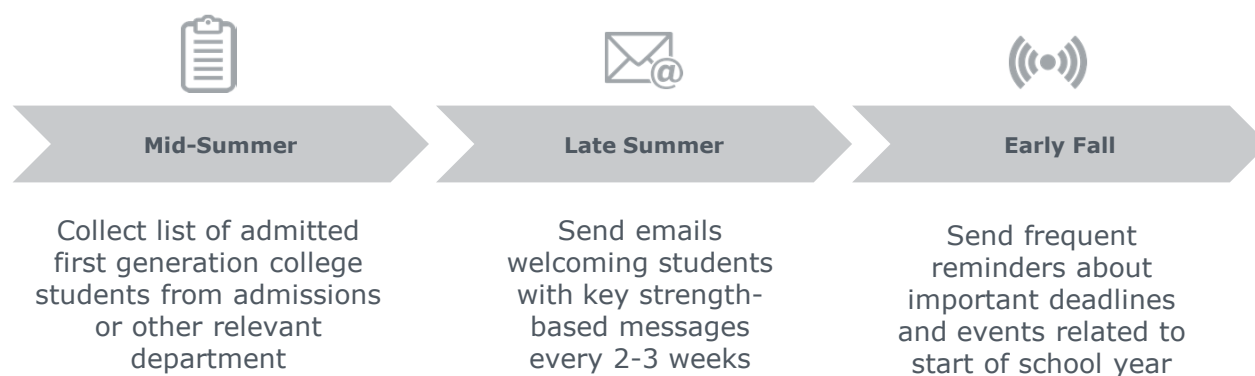
---

Even after providing clear guidance and support in campus navigation, many first generation college students still struggle in their transitions. They report feeling isolated, not belonging, and ultimately questioning their decision to attend their institution. These thoughts quickly become very isolating when students cannot find other students going through the same things. The following tools provide resources to proactively identify and address areas that are pivotal to these students' success, such as finding relatable peers, normalizing experiences, and positive identity reinforcement.

## Targeted Summer Outreach Campaign

Because first generation college students are not a homogeneous group and many may not identify as first generation college students at all, it can be difficult for them to recognize and connect with resources that are dedicated to them on campus. It is important that institutions proactively outreach to their first generation student populations to share positive messaging and information about their identity, and connect them with key resources and peer groups. This can be done through a targeted summer outreach email campaign.

### Important Program Components



The following pages will guide you through creating a robust targeted summer outreach email campaign for your first generation students.

# Targeted Summer Outreach Campaign

## Step 1: Collect list of admitted first generation students

Some colleges collect information on applications about first generation student status. For those that do, collecting a list of students can be done through the admissions office. For those colleges that do not record this information in admissions, offices or student organizations that serve large numbers of these students may be able to provide lists of first generation college students.



### Two Key Messages to Include

#### 1. "You are not alone here"

Inform students that there are other first generation college students on campus.

#### 2. "We have resources to support you"

Make students aware of the campus resources available and the expectation that they use them.

## Step 2: Compile information for emails

You can use your emails to ensure that students are aware of key campus resources and existing support networks on campus. Use the list below to brainstorm networks and resources that already exist on campus which serve first generation college students and incorporate them into your emails.

Network #1: First generation college student organization

Network #2: First generation students social media groups

Network #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Network #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource #1: Writing center

Resource #2: Academic advisor

Resource #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Resource #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Adapted from material shared by UNC Chapel Hill.

# Targeted Summer Outreach Campaign

### Step 3: Compile list a of essential “to do’s”

Identify important start of year tasks and their deadlines to include in your email reminders. Use the guide below to create a master list.

Task	Deadline
Housing application due	
FAFSA verification due	
Orientation fee due	

Source: Adapted from material shared by UNC Chapel Hill.

## Targeted Summer Outreach Campaign

### Step 4: Create master timeline for all mailers

It is important to decide in advance what topics you will send out each month and who will be responsible for writing them. That way, they can be automated and cause minimal burden on staff.

Date	Message/Reminders	Staffer	Due Date
1 <sup>st</sup> week of June	1. Welcome to the University! 2.		
3 <sup>rd</sup> week of June			
1 <sup>st</sup> week of July			
3 <sup>rd</sup> week of July			
1 <sup>st</sup> week of August			
2 <sup>nd</sup> week of August			
3 <sup>rd</sup> week of August			
4 <sup>th</sup> week of August			
1 <sup>st</sup> week of September			
2 <sup>nd</sup> week of September			

Source: Adapted from material shared by UNC Chapel Hill.

## Targeted Summer Outreach Campaign

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### Step 5: Audit email campaign

Once the newsletters are written, be sure to review them. Ask yourself the questions below.

1. Does the message celebrate first generation college student status?
2. Does the message offer targeted resources?
3. Does the message make the presence of other first generation college students on campus apparent?
4. Is messaging consistent and clear?

# First Generation College Student Online Portal

A centralized webpage with resources for first generation college students is a great way for your students to connect and get information. Below is an example from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which can be viewed at <http://firstgeneration.unc.edu/>.

## Carolina Firsts' Online Portal Provides Information to Incoming Students

**Consistency**  
Branding is consistent across programmatic efforts

**Visibility** Website highlights how many students on campus are also first generation college goers

**Available Information**  
News related to events, student accomplishments and opportunities are posted to the website

**Positive Messaging**  
Videos highlight the stories of current first generation college students



IMAGE CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA CHAPEL HILL.

EAB recommends that your webpage include the following information, but we encourage you to think of other relevant information to add. Coordinate putting the website together and maintaining it with your university's information technology department.

### Website Content Checklist

	Information
	Percentage or number of students on campus who identify as first generation college students
	Programs catering to first generation college students
	Support services often accessed by first generation college students
	Explanation of what first generation college student means
	Testimonials from first generation college students, staff, and faculty

Source: Adapted from material shared by UNC Chapel Hill.

## Shared Experience Video Campaign

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First generation college students often report feelings of not belonging on campus. In order to address this, colleges should provide access to relatable role-models and peers for their first generation college students. An easy way to raise student awareness of these examples is to create a video campaign featuring student, faculty, and alumni, who were also first generation college students.

### **Step 1: Identify individuals across campus who were first generation college students**

Begin by identifying individuals in key constituent groups across campus who were or are first generation college students. Be sure to include current students, alumni, faculty, and university staff. There are a number of ways to collect information on who was or is a first generation college student on your campus.

#### **Option 1: Reach out to existing campus affinity groups**

First generation college student affinity groups may already exist on your campus. These affinity groups are an excellent place to seek out individuals to share their stories, since they are centered around a shared experience and interest in creating support networks.

#### **Option 2: Find interest via word-of-mouth**

If there are no affiliation groups on your campus, you can make people aware of your call for submissions via word of mouth. This can literally be a person to person request for names of potentially interested parties or can be done through a flyer campaign and emails.

# Shared Experience Video Campaign

## Step 2: Record interviews

Once you have identified individuals to interview, find a quiet space in which to record your interviews. Use the interview question guides below to conduct your interviews. Ensure that all of your interviewees sign a video release form, which your general council should have.

### Interview Questions for Students:

1. When did you first realize that you were a first generation college student?
2. How did being a first generation college student impact your college experience?
3. How did you feel when you first arrived on campus?
4. What are some of the strengths you think are unique to first generation college students?
5. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced when you started college?
6. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
7. What do you wish you knew before you came to college?
8. What advice would you give to a first generation college student who is starting school?
9. What made you want to come to college?
10. What has been your favorite aspect of being a college student so far?
11. How did you find other students to relate and connect to?
12. What are your plans for after school?

### Interview Questions for Faculty and Staff:

1. When did you first realize that you were a first generation college student?
2. How did being a first generation college student impact your college experience?
3. What are some of the strengths you think are unique to first generation college students?
4. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced when you started college?
5. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
6. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced after you graduated?
7. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
8. What do you wish you knew about university faculty and staff when you first went to college?
9. What advice would you give to a current first generation college student?

### Interview Questions for Alumni:

1. When did you first realize that you were a first generation college student?
2. How did being a first generation college student impact your college experience?
3. What are some of the strengths you think are unique to first generation college students?
4. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced when you started college?
5. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
6. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced after you graduated?
7. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
8. What advice would you give to a first generation college student who is about to graduate?
9. What advice would you give to a current first generation college student?

Source: Adapted from material shared by San Jose State University.

# Shared Experience Video Campaign

## Step 3: Edit videos

Below is a list of things to consider while editing your videos.

Key aspects to keep in mind while editing:

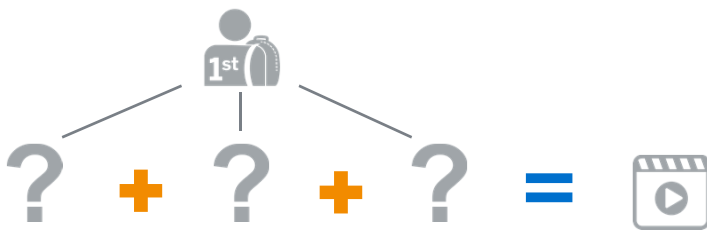
- 1. Shorter is generally better.** While you might be tempted to include the entire interview that you recorded of a student, faculty member, or alumni, students today prefer short video content, often called "video clips", that are less than 1 minute in duration. Try to edit each interview or video to less than 2 to 3 minutes.
- 2. You do not need to include the recording of the question.** When you are editing the responses of your interviewees, you should not include the part of the video where you can hear yourself or the staff member who did the recording, asking the question. Just stick to the answer and delete any video where there is a long pause or silence.
- 3. Make sure all of the speech in the video is the same volume.** Some people speak louder than others. If you are creating a video that features multiple interviewees, be sure to adjust the volume in your editing software so that they all sound a similar volume.

Below are some recommended sample formats for your videos:

### Option 1: Multiple interviewees, same question



### Option 2: Same interviewee, multiple questions



### Option 3: One interviewee, one question



Source: Adapted from material shared by San Jose State University.

## Shared Experience Video Campaign

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### **Step 4: Distribute videos**

Distributing videos via social media is an easy way to share them across campus quickly. Post them to your own social media account pages and send them to other university departments to post on their pages as well. You may also want to consider incentivizing students to share them online with giveaways or raffles.

## Community Welcome Event

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It is important to help your first generation college students connect with each other and find relatable examples of success in college. A first generation college student welcome event either at orientation or during the first couple weeks of the semester can accomplish this.

### **Step 1: Recruit first generation faculty and staff**

In order for first generation college students to identify role models of success, they need to be introduced to individuals with similar backgrounds who have been successful in higher education. University faculty and staff are easy to access examples of success and are likely to be interested in supporting these students. EAB recommends identifying faculty who would be interested via word of mouth or through announcements to faculty groups. Use the template on the next page to reach out to identified individuals about the event.

# Community Welcome Event

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## Faculty and Staff Event Invitation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to you from the (Office Name) to invite you to attend our the First Generation College Student Welcome Event. This event is a new program that we are offering to our admitted first generation college student freshmen on (date) at (time) in (location).

As you may be aware, first generation college students sometimes struggle to adjust to college more so than their continuing generation peers and their parents often have not had the college experience necessary to help guide them through the transition smoothly. In order to help ease the transition, we are inviting faculty and staff who were first generation college students themselves, or have a special interest in supporting this group, to attend the event.

Your role in the event would be to (lead a group discussion at your table, talk with students about your own experience as a first generation college student, etc.). We hope that the presence of faculty and staff who are active supporters of this group of students, will provide our incoming first generation college students with advice and words of support, but also serve as relatable examples of success in post-secondary education.

Your attendance would be greatly appreciated. Please RSVP by (date) to (Name).

Sincerely,

Name

Department

Contact Information

## Community Welcome Event

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### Step 2: Recruit first generation upperclassmen for a student panel

Another important source of role models is current first generation upperclassmen. They can share their more recent experiences with incoming students and provide encouragement to pursue help from resources on campus. You may want to begin with your TRIO program, first generation student organization, or the admissions office to recruit students for your panel. You may also use the list below to brainstorm other offices or organizations that are able to recommend students. Send the invitation on the next page to students to invite them to participate.

Office #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Office #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Office #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Office #4: \_\_\_\_\_

# Community Welcome Event

---

## Student Panel Invitation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to you from the (Office Name) to invite you to attend our the First Generation College Student Welcome Event. This event is a new program that we are offering to our admitted first generation college student freshmen on (date) at (time) in (location).

As you may be aware, first generation college students sometimes struggle to adjust to college. In order to help ease the transition, we are inviting upperclassmen who successfully completed their first year of college to attend the event.

We would like for you to share your experiences with other students as a part of a first generation college student speaker panel. We hope that hearing the stories of successful students like you, will provide our incoming first generation college students with advice and words of support, but also serve as relatable examples of success in college.

Your attendance would be greatly appreciated. Please RSVP by (date) to (Name).

Sincerely,

Name

Department

Contact Information

## Community Welcome Event

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### Step 3: Plan the event schedule

Once you have recruited faculty, staff, and students, create a schedule for your event. EAB recommends including an ice breaker to encourage students to mingle with one another and dedicated time for the student panel. Below is a sample schedule.

#### Sample Schedule

Time Allotment	Program Element
10 minutes	Welcome
20 minutes	Icebreaker
30 minutes	Overview of first generation student experience
30 minutes	Faculty experience sharing
45 minutes	Student panel
45 minutes	Socializing time

### Step 4: Repeat for spring admitted and transfer students

Students admitted in the spring or who transfer into the institution are often overlooked. Their integration into campus is pivotal to their success and since first generation college students are extremely likely to have started at a community college, it is important to incorporate these groups into an event like this, so that they can build connections with peers and campus role models.

## Campus Support Campaign

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A campus-wide support campaign, modeled after the Safe Zone campaign for LGBTQ identifying students, will help students visually recognize individuals or offices that actively seek to support first generation college students.

### Step 1: Create a logo

Work with your campus or department marketing liaison to create a logo that will help identify individuals or offices as supporters of first generation college students. Alternatively, offer students the opportunity to submit designs for the logo. Offering a prize, such as a university book store gift card, can encourage participation. The department may also engage faculty and students in the university's graphic design program to collaborate on logo design.

### Step 2: Create an accompanying information sheet

Not all campus supporters are aware of the challenges that are unique to the first generation college experience, or about the resources that may be key in aiding their success. EAB recommends creating a one page information sheet with information about first generation college students and some of the unique challenges that they face, along with related talking points and campus resources.

#### Front Page: Information about first generation college students

Begin by collecting facts about first generation college students in general. These can be gathered from the EAB study ["Transforming the First Generation College Student Experience"](#).

For Example:

- A first generation college student is a student whose parents did not graduate from a four-year college or university within the United States.
- First generation college students comprise over 24% of the United States college-going population.

Follow up with your institutional research department or admissions office to collect campus specific data on first generation student enrollment and outcomes on your campus.

#### Back Page: Unique challenges and relevant resources

Gather information about some of the unique challenges that face first generation college students either in general, or specific to your campus. Then, use the worksheet on the following page to create talking points related to those challenges and pinpoint relevant campus resources that are important in supporting a student through that issue.

# Campus Support Campaign

## Information Sheet Worksheet

Unique Challenge	Talking Points	Campus Resources
Our population of first generation students is predominately low income and generally cannot afford to go home over school breaks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When asking about plans for travel over breaks, don't assume that the student plans to travel and be sure to offer resources. Example: "Holiday breaks are coming and your residence hall is closing, will you be travelling or do you need to contact housing to arrange alternative housing over the break?"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Office of Residence Life – Halls open over breaks information <a href="http://www.university.edu/winterbreak">www.university.edu/winterbreak</a></li><li>First Generation Program Need-Based Travel Stipends</li></ul>

Source: Adapted from material shared by University of Rochester.

# Campus Support Campaign

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## **Step 3: Request in-kind donation for printing, decals, and stickers**

If your state and university allows tax deductions for in-kind donations, it may be worth while to ask vendors if they would be able to give you a discount or donate the printing or supply costs in exchange for a charitable contribution receipt. While requesting donations or discounts, be sure to highlight the mission of the project and explain that the logos will be given away to raise awareness, rather than sold. Use the letter on the next page to request a donation, if applicable.

# Campus Support Campaign

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## Sample Donation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on behalf of (Program Name) at (University Name). My name is (Name) and I am the (Title) of the (Program Name), a program developed to help first generation college students. These are students who are the first in their family to attend a 4-year university. These students need additional guidance in navigating through their college years, because their parents are often unfamiliar with the processes and requirements of graduation.

We are putting together an awareness campaign to help first generation college students on our campus more easily identify faculty and staff who are trained to help guide them through their time on campus. The campaign will consist of logos on stickers or decals that can be posted on office doors, signifying that the administrator or staff member inside can help answer their questions.

Because our program has limited funds, we are writing to request your assistance. If your company is able to offer our initiative a discount or an in-kind donation of materials or services, our students would benefit greatly. We are hoping to print (estimated number) of decals for distribution this fall.

The university will not profit from your donation in any way and donated services will benefit the first generation college students on our campus. (Optional: In addition to recognition for your donation, the university would be able to provide the (form name) to document your donation for tax purposes.)

We hope that you will be able to help us support our students in need.

We will reach out to you later this week, in follow up to this letter. However, should you have questions or wish to arrange to make a donation or discount sooner, you may contact us at (Phone number) or (email address).

Thank you sincerely for your consideration,

Name  
Title  
Contact Information  
University Name

## Campus Support Campaign

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### **Step 4: Inform campus community**

Once you have the decals and informational sheets ready for distribution, EAB recommends emailing the campus community to inform faculty, staff, and students about the program and the ability to participate. The following email templates can be sent, in addition to social media posts, to gain participation and campus awareness.

# Campus Support Campaign

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## Sample Campaign Participation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on behalf of (Program Name) at (University Name). My name is (Name) and I am the (Title) of the (Program Name), a program developed to help first generation college students. These are students who are the first in their family to attend a 4-year university.

We have put together an awareness campaign to help first generation college students on our campus more easily identify faculty and staff who are able to help guide them through their time on campus. The campaign will consist of logos on stickers or decals that can be posted on your office door, signifying that you are willing to help answer their questions or provide support. All individuals who request a decal will also receive an information sheet with helpful guidance on supporting first generation students on our campus, so you do not need to have prior experience or training to request a decal.

We will soon be emailing to student body to make them aware of the relevance of the campaign and the decal.

We hope that you will be a part of our effort to support the first generation college students on our campus. You can request a sticker by responding to this email with your name and office location. If you have questions about the program, please do not hesitate to contact us at (Phone number) or (email address).

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Name  
Title  
Contact Information  
University Name

# Campus Support Campaign

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## Sample Student Campaign Awareness Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on behalf of (Program Name) at (University Name). My name is (Name) and I am the (Title) of the (Program Name), a program developed to help first generation college students. I am writing to make you aware of a new campaign on campus – the (Program Name).

You may have seen decals on some of your professors' office doors or at other offices on campus that look like this. (Insert image of decal). This decal signifies that there is faculty or staff within that office that actively supports first generation college students and would be more than happy to answer any question that may arise during your time at (university name). No question is too big or small to go in and ask!

We hope that you will take advantage of these supportive individuals if you are a first generation college student. If you are not one, however, and would like to learn how you can help support first generation college students, these individuals are also available to help. We hope that you utilize this campaign and help us make (university name) a welcoming place for first generation college students!

Sincerely,

Name  
Title  
Contact Information  
University Name



# Rethinking Our Approach to Student Involvement

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SECTION

3

# Rethinking Our Approach to Student Involvement

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Getting involved on campus has a positive effect not only on student persistence during college, but also on their future success. However, first generation college students have a reputation for not being as engaged on campus as their peers. They often view academics as their sole or primary reason for attending the institution. It is a mistake, though, to assume that just because first generation college students may not engage with the campus the way we usually expect students to, that they are not engaging in valuable developmental opportunities and gaining relevant skills. The following tools provide guidance for acknowledging the work students are doing off-campus, as well as incentivizing on-campus involvement.

# Diverse Involvement Recognition Program

First generation college students are often active off-campus, within their communities. However, most traditional campus involvement programs only recognize on-campus involvement. EAB recommends offering a leadership development program that recognized student’s involvement both on- and off-campus.

## Step 1: Create learning outcomes

First, determine what learning outcomes you want students to accomplish from involvement in your program. Use the chart below to list them.

### Learning Outcome List

Learning Outcome
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ryerson University.

# Diverse Involvement Recognition Program

## Step 2: Create requirement matrix for each learning outcome

First, determine the requirements that each student must complete in order to have fulfilled a learning outcome. Below is a sample of a learning outcome and related requirements. Use the chart on the next page to list your own requirements. EAB recommends having between three and five requirements per learning outcome.

### Sample Learning Outcome Requirement Matrix

Learning Outcome	Activity Requirements
1. Students should understand that leadership takes many forms by the time they graduate.	1. Attend leadership seminar or workshop 2. Act as an officer or leader in an organization 3. Mentor someone in the community, on- or off-campus 4. 5.

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ryerson University.

# Diverse Involvement Recognition Program

Learning Outcome Requirement Matrix

Learning Outcome	Activity Requirements
1.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
2.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
3.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
4.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ryerson University.

# Diverse Involvement Recognition Program

## Step 3: Create criteria for recognition of off-campus involvement

EAB recommends creating a list of attributes that would qualify an off-campus activity for recognition by your program. You should consider the level of involvement and responsibilities of similar on-campus activities when creating your criteria. Then determine how many of the criteria an activity must include in order to be recognized. Below is an example of an activity and its related criteria. Brainstorm with staff to complete the matrix.

Off-Campus Engagement Recognition Criteria Matrix

Off-Campus Engagement Activity	Recognition Criteria
Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>At least two hours per week time commitment</li><li>In-person meetings</li></ul>

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ryerson University.

# Diverse Involvement Recognition Program

## Step 4: Create a reflection exercise for each learning outcome

The goal of this program is to help students think comprehensively about how everything they do contributes to their growth as a leader. Use the form below to create a reflection exercise for students to use to document their development for each learning outcome.

### Student Reflection and Learning Outcome Documentation Form

Name:	
Learning Outcome:	
Activity Requirement #1:	
Activity Requirement #2:	
Activity Requirement #3:	
Activity Requirement #4:	
Activity Requirement #5:	
What did you learn about (Learning Outcome) from participating in these activities?	
How does this change your perspective on leadership more generally?	
What did you learn about yourself as a leader from these activities?	
Date Turned in:	Student Signature:
Activity Supervisor Signature:	University Advisor Signature;

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ryerson University.

## Involvement Incentive App

Getting first generation college students involved on campus has proven benefits but can be difficult because of their competing outside commitments or lack of understanding the importance of involvement. The use of gamification through a mobile application to incentivize involvement, however, can help encourage on campus involvement among first generation college students by making it simple to learn about and actually get involved on-campus.

### Step 1: Select a vendor

Your first task is to decide whether to work with an external vendor or with internal staff to build your application. Once you make this decision, you will be able to determine cost. EAB recommends evaluating the following pros and cons of either choice before making a decision.



#### Option 1: Internal build

##### Pros:

- More control over application design
- Potentially less expensive
- Could be easier to tie into existing university networks

##### Cons:

- May be difficult to find proficient staff
- Staff availability may slow release and updates



#### Option 2: Outside vendor

##### Pros:

- Potentially faster turn around time for build and updates
- May be able to provide 24/7 user support

##### Cons:

- Potentially more expensive
- May be limited in compatibility with existing university information systems

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ball State University.

# Involvement Incentive App

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## Step 2: Identify funding sources

Once you have estimated costs and have an idea of the initial build and annual maintenance costs, you will know how much money you will need to raise in order to move forward. Below are some options for your staff to explore for funding your application.



### Option 1: Department budget line item

If your department has funding available for special projects, you may be able to make a request to cover the costs associated with your application. Be sure to explain how the application will impact student success on campus in your request.



### Option 2: Grant funding

The second option is to seek out grant funding for the project. There are a number of non-profit entities that offer grants for education related endeavors each year. If possible, apply for multi-year grants, so that you have enough funding to cover improvements to the application over multiple years.



### Option 3: Individual donations

Finally, if neither of the first two options are available or do not cover all of the costs associated with the application, you may need to solicit donations from individuals. In this case, you may want to or be required to work with the advancement office at your university.

## Involvement Incentive App

### Step 3: Identify Engagement Tasks

Once you have secured funding, you can begin planning how students will interact with the application. First, identify which on-campus engagement activities impact student success on your campus most. In order to do this, you may want to conduct an assessment with the help of institutional research to identify which tasks are currently correlated with student success on your campus. Use the following chart to identify tasks that are correlated with student success and rank them according to your assessment with an impact and time commitment level of 1 (being lowest) to 5 (being highest). Do this for each student service unit, as well as tasks in academic affairs, such as meeting with an academic advisor. Fill in the worksheet on the following page using the sample below as a guide.

### Sample Engagement Task Impact Worksheet

Office: Academic Affairs	Time Commitment	Impact Level
Meet with an academic advisor	3	5
Register for classes early	2	5
Sit in front of class	1	1
Office: Career Center	Time Commitment	Impact Level
Meet with career counselor	4	5
Attend career center workshop	3	4

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ball State University.

# Involvement Incentive App

## Engagement Task Impact Worksheet

Office:	Time Commitment	Impact Level
Office:	Time Commitment	Impact Level

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ball State University.

# Involvement Incentive App

## Step 4: Determine incentive system

In order to convince students to interact with the application and continue to engage with it, you will likely need to offer an incentive. If your first generation college student population is also comprised of a large number of low-income students, financial incentives are ideal, in order to lower the opportunity cost of engaging on campus. EAB recommends that these incentives be allowed to accumulate over the course of the semester and be eligible to be redeemed for activities that would further boost involvement, such as tickets to an on-campus sporting event or credit for an on-campus meal. The matrix below represents a scale of what certain tasks should be worth. Use this matrix to determine what the monetary financial incentive should be for each level and the following worksheet to brainstorm possible incentive redemption items and corresponding values.

### Incentive Matrix

Time Commitment	Impact Level	Inventive Level	Incentive Level Value
1	1	1	\$0.20
1	2	1.5	\$0.40
1	3	2	\$0.60
1	4	2.5	\$0.80
1	5	3	\$1.00
2	1	1.5	\$1.20
2	2	2	\$1.40
2	3	2.5	\$1.60
2	4	3	\$1.80
2	5	3.5	\$2.00
3	1	2	\$2.20
3	2	2.5	\$2.40
3	3	3	\$2.60
3	4	3.5	\$2.80
3	5	4	\$3.00
4	1	2.5	\$3.20
4	2	3	\$3.40
4	3	3.5	\$3.60
4	4	4	\$3.80
4	5	4.5	\$4.00
5	1	3	\$4.20
5	2	3.5	\$4.40
5	3	4	\$4.60
5	4	4.5	\$4.80
5	5	5	\$5.00

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ball State University.

# Involvement Incentive App

## Incentive Redemption Worksheet

[illegible]

Source: Adapted from material shared by Ball State University.

# Involvement Incentive App

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## Step 5: Determine tracking methods

Depending on the technology already available at your university or what you budgeted for, you may be able to use student identification swipe card data to verify that students complete certain tasks. There are other tasks, however, that may depend on the honors system, such as sitting in the front of class. Talk to your information technology department about what is available on campus that you might be able to tie into the application and talk to your legal department about any necessary requirements or disclosures you must provide in order to access the data.

## Step 6: Build and test the application

Work with your application developer and/or your information technology department to build your application. Tie any available university tracking systems into your application, as well. Do not forget to test your application before you make it live for students.

## Step 7: Complete targeted recruitment of students

Now that you have a working application, you are ready to recruit students to use it. We recommend limiting participation during the first year so that you can collect feedback and further improve the application before you make it more widely available. If your student population has a small number of first generation college students, they may make an ideal test group. If your student population is widely comprised of first generation college students, we recommend selecting a mix of students from a variety of income levels within that group, so that you can test engagement levels based on income. Keep in mind there may be ethical considerations to make in planning who to involve and exclude in your test group. Use the email below to invite students to download the application and begin using it.

## Sample Student Recruitment Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on behalf of (Program Name) at (University Name). My name is (Name) and I am the (Title) of the (Program Name). Our office has recently developed an app that rewards students for completing tasks around campus, such as going to a campus event or meeting with an academic advisor. We are testing it out this year and would like to invite you to participate. Participation is free and by completing tasks, you will be able to earn rewards that you can redeem at/for (insert examples)!

If you are interested in participating, please download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play! You can start using it immediately and begin redeeming rewards on (date). We may ask you for your feedback on the app towards the end of the (semester/year).

Please, let us know if you have any questions about our app!

Sincerely,

Name  
Title  
Contact Information  
University Name

## Involvement Incentive App

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### Step 8: Continue to build and improve application

At the end of the semester or year, you should follow up with participants to gather feedback for improvement or additions. This should happen at least annually, as you expand the app or expand the group of students who are invited to participate. Use the questions below to gather feedback in either short survey or focus group form.

### Application Improvement Questions

1. On a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult), how easy or difficult is it to use with the application?
2. On a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult) how easy or difficult is it to earn incentive dollars with the application?
3. On a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult), how easy or difficult is it to redeem your incentive dollars for prizes?
4. What tasks did you like the most?
5. What tasks did you like the least?
6. Were there any tasks that you felt were not worth the incentive value? If so, which ones?
7. How many tasks did you intend to complete this past semester?
8. Did you meet, exceed, or fall short of your goal?
9. If applicable, why did you exceed or fall short of your goal?
10. Are there any tasks that you would recommend we add?
11. Did using the app introduce you to a university service or event that you did not previously know about?
12. Did using the app encourage you to start using a university service or attend an event that you had not taken advantage of before?
13. Do you intend to continue using the app next semester? Why or why not?





# Frontloading Guided Practice with Career Development

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SECTION

4

# Frontloading Guided Practice with Career Development

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Much of the work in supporting first generation college students centers around their initial transition to campus and ultimately completion. However, we know that our role is not just to prepare students to graduate, but to succeed after graduation. For first generation college students who often have limited personal connections to leverage in the job search, this means we must connect them with opportunities for professional development early. The following tools provide resources for engaging first generation college students in building experience and confidence in professional interactions, networking opportunities, and accessing other important career development opportunities.

## Guided Group Job Shadow

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First generation college students often have little experience interacting with professionals in a business setting, which can cause them to feel uncomfortable reaching out to professionals for help with career exploration. One solution is to create opportunities for first generation college students to engage with executives and familiarize themselves with professional interactions in a guided group environment, which feels safe, supportive, and unthreatening.

### Step 1: Brainstorm potential employer partners

The first step is to compile a list of employers in the area with whom the college has a positive well established relationship. This may include employers who often take on your university's students as interns or employees, employers who actively recruit on your campus, and businesses owned by alumni. Create your list below.

#### Potential Employer Partner List

- #1: \_\_\_\_\_
- #2: \_\_\_\_\_
- #3: \_\_\_\_\_
- #4: \_\_\_\_\_
- #5: \_\_\_\_\_
- #6: \_\_\_\_\_
- #7: \_\_\_\_\_
- #8: \_\_\_\_\_
- #9: \_\_\_\_\_
- #10: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guided Group Job Shadow

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### Step 2: Outreach to potential employer partners

Once you have compiled a list of potential employer partners, you will need to contact each one to request their participation and explain the value of your program. Use the following sample email to create your outreach.

#### Sample Employer Partnership Email

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on behalf of the (University Name, program name) to inquire about a potential partnership in service of the career preparation of our undergraduate students. As you may know, your company has a long history of (hiring graduates from our college, etc.). As we continue to prepare our students for future employment with companies like yours, we aspire to connect some of our traditionally underserved student groups with opportunities for professional development.

We hope, that you might be able to dedicate a couple of hours of your time to help us with a new initiative for first generation college students on our campus: group job shadowing. Our student body is comprised of (percentage) students who are the first in the families to go to college. These students often do not have family members who can connect them with individuals who work at companies like yours and find themselves underprepared for their job searches after college.

We wonder if you would be willing to dedicate 1 to 3 hours on a weekday to host a small group of our first generation college students at your office, under the supervision of a university staff member, to discuss job descriptions, your industry, and general recommendations for professional development. If you or a member of your staff would be willing to participate, we would greatly appreciate your dedication to our students and your potential future employment pool.

If you are available to help, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Name  
Title  
Contact Information  
University Name

# Guided Group Job Shadow

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## Step 3: Recruit students

Once you know which employers are willing to host students, you can coordinate with the university career center and first generation college student affinity groups to recruit students for the program. Send an email that these groups can include in their weekly newsletter and distribute flyers with information about how to sign up.

## Step 4: Plan visit logistics and prepare students

Once you know how many students will be attending you can make arrangements for transportation. Your students will likely also need assistance in preparing for the visit. EAB recommends holding a session or creating a worksheet that will help students prepare questions to ask during the visit and set expectations for behavior and professional attire. Your university's career center may already have a seminar or informational sheets that you can use for this purpose.

## Step 5: Have students write professional thank you notes

Use thanking your employer hosts as a learning opportunity by enlisting the student job shadowers to write thank you notes to their hosts. This is a great opportunity to help your students learn the basics of professional etiquette. Use the resources below to help them draft their letters.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Professional-Thank-You-Note>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Sample/Professional-Thank-You-Letter>

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/thankyouletters/a/thank-you-letter-examples.htm>

## First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

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Introducing first generation college students early on to professional development opportunities is essential. One of the best ways to do this is to engage students in a co-curricular program during their first year of college, so that they have their remaining college years to expand their professional networks and take advantage of common professional development opportunities. Use the guide below to create your own professional development co-curricular program.

### Component 1: Create a curriculum

Developing a curriculum is the first step in creating a robust co-curricular program. Complete the following steps to determine student need and align current resources to prepare your students for life after graduation.

#### Step 1: Assess student need

You must first assess the professional development needs of your students. Depending on the composition of your first generation college student population, needs may be very different. A traditional first generation college student population may require training in basic resume writing, before your program can help them prepare for internships. A population of adult students may need assistance in industry or job exploration, in order to help them see employment possibilities beyond their existing employment history.

The following survey assesses key areas in which students may need focused development. Collect the email addresses of the first-year, first generation college students on your campus, perhaps through an existing first generation college student support center or student organization, that you would like to invite to participate in the program and distribute the survey online or as an attachment.

This survey should be distributed annually to incoming first generation college students so that the curriculum can be adjusted according to need.

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

## Student Professional Development Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been employed?    Yes                      No

If yes, what employment category was your job in?

Service                  Professional (Office Job)                  Retail                  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

A resume is a one-page document that lists your work history, involvement in clubs or volunteer work, and your educational history. Do you have a resume?

Yes                      No

A cover letter is a one-page formal letter that you send to a potential employer, in addition to your resume, when applying for a job. It explains why you want the job and how your experience relates to the job description. Have you ever written a cover letter?

Yes                      No

A job shadow is when you spend time following a working professional through their day at work, with the intention of better understanding what their job duties are in a typical day. Have you ever participated in a job shadow?

Yes                      No

An informational interview is when you sit down with a professional and ask them questions about their job, the company that they work for, or the industry that they work in, with the intention of gathering information for your own professional development. Have you ever requested an informational interview?

Yes                      No

Have you ever participated in an informational interview?

Yes                      No

On a scale of 1 (Very Uncomfortable) to 5 (Very Comfortable), how comfortable are you interacting with professionals?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

On a scale of 1 (Very Unlikely) to 5 (Very Likely) how likely are you to request an informational interview from a professional that you did not know personally?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

On a scale of 1 (Needs a lot of work) to 5 (It's perfect), how would you rate the quality of your resume?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

On a scale of 1 (Needs a lot of work) to 5 (It's perfect), how would you rate the quality of your cover letter?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

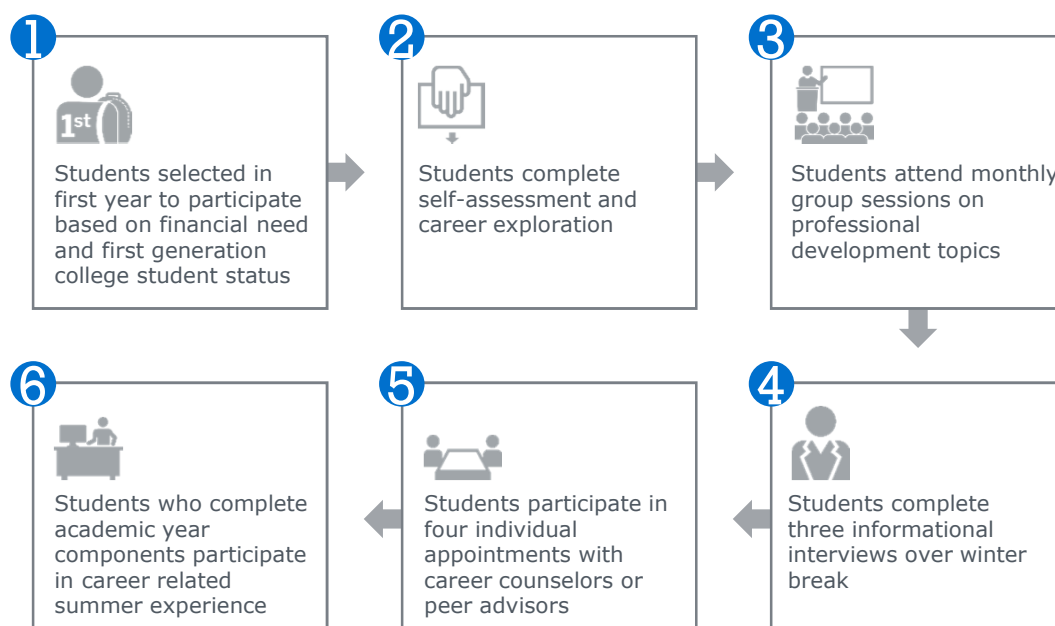
Source: Adapted from material shared by Hamilton College.

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

## Step 2: Determine curriculum components

Below is an overview of Hamilton College's "First Year Forward" program, on which this tactic is based. Using their program as a guide, determine what elements you would like to incorporate into your program and what existing resources on campus you can use to create your curriculum. Fill in the guide on the following page. EAB recommends including informational interviews and a summer career exploration experience, in addition to any workshops or advisor meetings required to meet student need.

### Hamilton College's Year-Long Career Development Initiative



Source: Adapted from material shared by Hamilton College.

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

## Curriculum Development Exercise

Program Component	Targeted Area for Growth	Existing Campus Resources	Session Date

Source: Adapted from material shared by Hamilton College.

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

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## **Component 2: Create a model for informational interviews**

First generation students report that one of the most impactful experiences in the program is informational interviews with working professionals. EAB recommends that these interviews take place over winter break, so that the interviews are not competing with other school work for students' time. Use the following worksheet to help students identify three individuals to interview over their winter break and log a reflection of the experience.

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

## Informational Interview Log

### Interview #1

(This interview can be with an individual who is close to you that you already feel comfortable speaking with, such as an uncle, aunt, or family friend.)

Name of person you are interviewing:

Date of interview:

Occupation/Industry:

Goal of interview: To learn about a job/company/industry.

What did you learn from this experience?

How did it affect, if at all, your current career plans?

### Interview #2

(This interview should be with an individual who is one step further removed from your comfort zone, such as the colleague of a relative or the owner of a local business that you frequent.)

Name of person you are interviewing:

Date of interview:

Occupation/Industry:

Goal of interview: To learn about a job/company/industry.

What did you learn from this experience?

How did it affect, if at all, your current career plans?

### Interview #3

(This interview should be with an individual who is one step further removed from your comfort zone than your second interview, perhaps someone you do not know personally, such as a university alumni.)

Name of person you are interviewing:

Date of interview:

Occupation/Industry:

Goal of interview: To learn about a job/company/industry.

What did you learn from this experience?

How did it affect, if at all, your current career plans?

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

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## **Component 3: Facilitate reflection & assessment**

After students have completed the program, you should assess what they have learned from the program by having students complete a reflection. Have students complete the following assessment to reflect upon their experience and gauge the success of the program.

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

## Student Professional Development Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 (Very Uncomfortable) to 5 (Very Comfortable), how comfortable are you interacting with professionals?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

On a scale of 1 (Very Unlikely) to 5 (Very Likely) how likely are you to request an informational interview from a professional that you did not know personally?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

On a scale of 1 (Needs a lot of work) to 5 (It's perfect), how would you rate the quality of your resume?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

On a scale of 1 (Needs a lot of work) to 5 (It's perfect), how would you rate the quality of your cover letter?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

What skills do you feel you developed because of the program?

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What were the most and least valuable components of the program?

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# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

## Component 4: Offer a summer career exploration experience

Students who complete the year long curriculum along with the three informational interviews, will be well prepared to participate in a summer internship or other career-related experience, such as job shadowing or volunteering, all of which can provide opportunities for career exploration, network building, and experience in professional interactions. These experiences are key in solidifying students' confidence in professional settings.

### Step 1: Determine requirements to participate

EAB recommends that students be required to complete all or most of the year-long curriculum requirements and informational interviews in order to participate in a career development experience, so that they are fully prepared to operate in a professional environment with confidence. Your institution, however, may determine that completing a certain number of requirements is sufficient, due to prior student work experience. Use the lists below to determine the best path for your students.



#### Require all components

Good for:

- Students who have never worked before
- Students with low levels of confidence in professional skills
- Students who are uncomfortable interacting with professionals



#### Require most components

Good for:

- Students with prior work experience
- Students with proven ability to act professionally in work environment
- Students with confidence reaching out for guidance and career advice

### Step 2: Secure funding

Since many first generation college students may not be able to afford the opportunity cost of participating in an unpaid internship or summer career development experience, the availability of stipends is important. Below are some recommendations for raising money for internship stipends. EAB recommends that each stipend be equivalent or as close as possible to 20 hours per week of work at the local minimum wage, over the course of 6 to 8 weeks.



#### Option 1: Work with the university advancement office

You may be able to work with the university advancement office to set up a scholarship or donation campaign for internship stipends. Additionally, they may know of donors who are looking to make an earmarked donation to the university for a similar program that they can connect you with.



#### Option 2: Solicit individual donations

You may need to run your own fundraising campaign to establish funds for internship stipends. If this is the case, you may want to consider setting a target that is large enough to invest and keep the program running off of accumulated interest or invested dividends from year to year. Work with your university business office to determine the best way to establish a fund.

Source: Adapted from material shared by Hamilton College.

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

## Step 3: Assist students with preparation for summer career development experience

This will likely be the first time that your student has applied for an internship or similar experience. Helping them establish a plan for securing their experience will increase their likelihood of success. Below are three checklists to use to walk students through the process.

### Internship Checklist

	Task	Due Date
	Create list of potential internships	
	Read application requirements	
	Secure required documents (letters of recommendation, transcripts)	
	Follow up on applications via phone or email	
	Create resume and cover letter	
	Review offers	
	Accept offer and confirm start date, hours, and required attire	
	Secure appropriate work attire	
	Create transportation plan	

### Job Shadow Checklist

	Task	Due Date
	Create list of potential job shadow locations	
	Determine best person to contact	
	Send professional email requesting job shadow	
	Follow up on email via phone	
	Confirm appointment time, date, and location	
	Secure appropriate work attire	
	Create transportation plan	

Source: Adapted from material shared by Hamilton College.

# First-Year Professional Development Bootcamp

## Informational Interview Checklist

	Task	Due Date
	Create list of potential interviewees	
	Determine best person to contact	
	Send professional emails requesting informational interviews	
	Follow up on emails via phone	
	Confirm appointment time, date, and Location	
	Secure appropriate work attire (Optional, if phone interview)	
	Create transportation plan (Optional, if phone interview)	
	Prepare questions and set goals for your interviews	
	Send thank you notes	

Source: Adapted from material shared by Hamilton College.

# Partnerships for Professional Attire

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The needs of first generation college students often extend beyond direct financial assistance, including the need for professional attire. One way to help eliminate this barrier is to leverage partnerships with local clothing stores for in-kind donations. This may be the first time students have shopped for professional attire, so it is important that your program not only provide what they need, but also help prepare them for future professional attire shopping and budget-mindedness.

**Step 1: Brainstorm national and local vendors with retail stores in your area**

The first step is to identify clothing vendors that have stores in your area that you can ask for donations. Keep in mind that these vendors should carry attire that would be deemed work appropriate by a variety of work environments.

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

#3: \_\_\_\_\_

#4: \_\_\_\_\_

#5: \_\_\_\_\_

#6: \_\_\_\_\_

#7: \_\_\_\_\_

#8: \_\_\_\_\_

#9: \_\_\_\_\_

#10: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Adapted from material shared by Georgetown University.

## Partnerships for Professional Attire

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### Step 2: Compose and send donation request letter

While a one night shopping event with a single donor is ideal, the opportunity to work with more vendors may enable you to accommodate more students or more donations. Send a letter like the sample below to the vendors on your list to gauge interest and decide the best approach, based on what stores in your area are able and willing to provide.

### Sample Donation Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on behalf of (Program Name) at (University Name). My name is (Name) and I am the (Title) of the (Program Name), a program developed to support college students who are the first in their family to attend a 4-year university. (Percentage of club) of the students who are served by our program are low-income and often have trouble affording professional attire to wear to the internships and jobs that they need to prepare them for work after college.

We are putting together professional attire shopping night for our students in (time frame). In order to provide students with free and low-cost options for professional clothing, I am reaching out to you to see if your store would be willing to host our students and to donate items or discounts for the students in our program in support of this cause.

The university will not profit from your donation in any way and all funds will go directly to students in the program for professional attire. (Optional: In addition to recognition for your donation, the university would be able to provide the (form name) to document your donation for tax purposes.)

We hope that you will be able to help support our students in need.

We will reach out to you later this week, in follow up to this letter. However, should you have questions or wish to arrange to make a donation sooner, you may contact us at (Phone number) or (email address).

Thank you sincerely for your consideration,

Name  
Title  
Contact Information  
University Name

## Partnerships for Professional Attire

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### Step 3: Partner with vendor(s) to decide day-of logistics

You may have one vendor who is able to accommodate your entire need and willing to host a shopping night. If you are hoping to serve a larger population of students, however, you may need to partner with multiple vendors and host your own shopping night. Below is an overview of the two options.



#### Option 1: Single vendor shopping night

Through this option, you would secure one vendor who would be able to host a shopping night, potentially in their store and supply students with discounts or a donated amount of money with which to shop for attire in the store. For example, each student may receive a \$200 budget and all or certain items in the store may be discounted 50%.



#### Option 2: Multiple vendor shopping night

There may not be a vendor in your area who is able or willing to donate the use of their store or supply all of your students with attire. In this case, using multiple vendor donations would be ideal. You can request and collect donations of items from multiple vendors, bring these donations to campus and either create your own shopping night with all of the collected items in a central location on campus or invite vendors to set up tables in a central campus location so that they can interact with students and help them choose attire that matches and fits properly.

# Partnerships for Professional Attire

### Step 4: Recruit students for the event

If your event is only for students registered with targeted programs, spreading information about the event should be relatively simple and could be done via word of mouth. Conversely, if the event is not coordinating with a specific program, you should gather a list of students who meet the university’s definition of first generation college student from admissions and invite those students to participate individually.

### Step 5: Prepare students for future budget-based shopping

In addition to providing access to professional attire, an event like this presents a learning opportunity for first generation college students. It is important that they leave the event not only with the clothing they will need to be successful, but also a knowledge base of how to select professional attire and shop within a budget in the future. EAB recommends either having stylists available to teach students about professional attire or having students research the subject prior to the event. The links below can provide a starting point for conversation and act as resources.

<http://www.wikihow.com/Buy-an-Office-Wardrobe-on-a-Budget>  
<http://lifehacker.com/how-can-i-create-a-work-friendly-wardrobe-on-a-budget-825337978>  
<http://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/trends/a500/office-dress-code-gs-0310/>

Ensure that your guidance includes the following topics:

	Topic
	Examples of different work environment dress codes
	List of essential items for men and women
	List of area stores, price ranges, and student discount policies
	List of office wardrobe “don’ts”

Source: Adapted from material shared by Georgetown University.

## Partnerships for Professional Attire

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### Step 6: Thank vendor(s)

It is important to formally recognize the contribution that the vendor has made to the university. Use the sample letter below as a guide.

#### Sample Thank You Letter

Dear (Vendor Contact),

On behalf of the (program name) at (university name), I am writing to formally thank you for your contribution of (items, quantity, or value) to our Professional Attire Shopping Night. Your donation enabled (number of participating students) to take advantage of professional development opportunities that will greatly impact their job readiness after college.

We truly appreciate your dedication to our program and for helping the students at (university name) prepare for bright futures!

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Program Name

University Name

### Step 7: Maintain relationship(s) with vendor(s)

Finally, in follow up, speak with the vendor about the importance of offering a program like this each year. Probe for their level of interest and ability to participate again next year and ask when would be the best time of year to contact them in preparation for the following year's program. Your business partners may operate on a different financial calendar than your university, so they may have a better idea of their ability to give at a different point in the year. Additionally, requesting donations at the end of the calendar year may be ideal for businesses looking to lower their tax burden before December 31<sup>st</sup>.

# Dedicated Alumni Network and Mentor Program

Having a network of alumni who were first generation college students can make alumni seem more accessible to first generation college students. These alumni have had first-hand experience being first generation college students and navigating the unique challenges these students will face upon graduation and throughout their careers. Use the guide below to create your own first generation alumni network and mentor program.

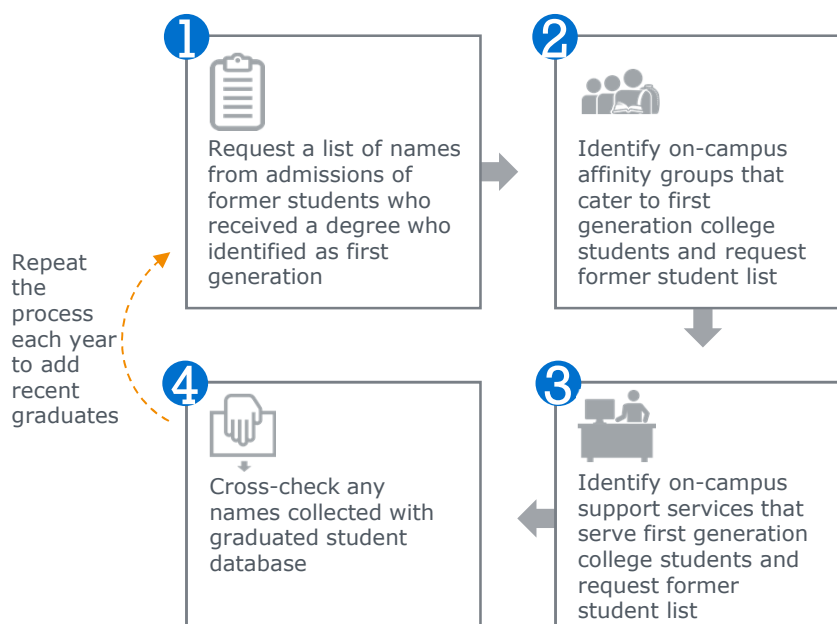
## Component 1: Establish first generation college student alumni group

If your college does not currently have a group specifically for alumni who were first generation college students, you may be able to work with your advancement or alumni relations group to create one. Follow the steps below to establish the group at your institution.

### Step 1: Gather contact information for first generation college student alumni

Your alumni office may already have this information. If they do not, you may be able to collect it from a variety of sources. Follow the flow chart below to collect names and contact information to start your group.

#### Contact Information Collection Process



Source: Adapted from material shared by Harvard University.

## Dedicated Alumni Network and Mentor Program

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### Step 2: Establish web presence

An official web presence is essential for ongoing contact today. It is also a low or no cost way to engage alumni in ongoing conversations with the university. Use the recommendations below to create a web presence that will remain active and will require low levels of staff involvement.

#### Components of a Self-Sustaining Web Presence



Select 2-3 social networks on which your alumni are already active users



Encourage alumni to take on leadership roles in facilitating conversations on the website



Automate messages and updates to your pages and groups using a free social media automation service

# Dedicated Alumni Network and Mentor Program

## Component 2: First generation college student alumni mentoring program

One of the most important components of this tactic is creating opportunities for current first generation college students to interact with and get to know alumni group members early on. One way to do this is through one-on-one mentor pairings. This enables the students to build their network and create a connection to the alumni group that can last well beyond the length of the program. We recommend that you offer this opportunity to first year students, so that they can get to know their mentor early in their college career and will feel comfortable reaching out to them for advice and assistance as they get closer to graduation.

### Step 1: Establish learning outcomes for program

The first step is to establish what it is that you intend for students who participate in the program to get out of their mentor relationship. Use the chart below to develop three to four learning outcomes for your program.

#### Learning Outcomes Worksheet

Students will....	By....	Measured by....
...feel comfortable interacting with a working professional	the end of their first semester	a self reflection administered by program staff.

Source: Adapted from material shared by Harvard University.

## Dedicated Alumni Network and Mentor Program

---

### Step 2: Recruit mentors from first generation alumni group

Since you have already established a contact list of alumni who were first generation college students and have set up your first generation alumni group web presence, recruiting members will be simple. Have a staffer send email outreach to alumni group members requesting their participation and post information about the program and how to sign up to be a mentor on the group's social media webpages. Use the sample letter below to send email outreach.

#### Alumni Mentor Outreach Letter Sample

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

On behalf of the First Generation College Student Alumni Group at (university name), we are proud to announce the start of a First Generation College Student Mentoring Program! We would like to invite you to participate by mentoring a first year student at (university) this year. Programs such as these have demonstrated impact on the success of the first generation college students in their job searches and careers after graduation and we are excited to offer our students the opportunity to get to know successful alumni like you.

If you are interested in being a mentor this year, please respond to this email and include your graduation year, major, and current occupation. We will be pairing students with their mentors on (date), so please let us know if you would like to participate before then.

Thank you in advance for your commitment to (university name) and our students!

Sincerely,

Name

Position

Contact Information

## Dedicated Alumni Network and Mentor Program

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### Step 3: Recruit student mentees from first-year class

In order for this program to be a success, you need to engage students in the opportunity to work with alumni. Since freshmen are rarely thinking about career planning in their first semester, staff will have to impress upon students the benefits of engaging in career development so early. The program also acts as a transitional support program for the students. EAB recommends selecting one of the following approaches.



#### Option 1: Send personalized invitations

If your campus tracks students who identify as first generation college students, request a list of incoming students from the appropriate department and send out personalized invitations via email alerting students to the opportunity and explaining how they can sign up.



#### Option 2: Align with a special interest group on campus

First year students on your campus will have likely found or been pointed to student groups and campus resources that cater to first generation college students or students with overlapping identities. Explain the benefits of your program to the individuals who run these groups or oversee these services, then ask them to refer students to your program.



#### Option 3: Make it mandatory

Some colleges have co-curricular requirements that students must complete before graduation. If a career preparation experience is currently a requirement, you may be able to lobby for this program to be included in the opportunities that students can participate in to complete their requirements.

# Dedicated Alumni Network and Mentor Program

## Step 4: Provide ongoing talking points for mentors and mentees

It is important that your mentors and mentees check in regularly. In order to encourage this and make these conversations relevant to their participation in the program, we recommend supplying mentors and mentees with recommended talking points throughout the year. Use the worksheet below to brainstorm talking points for each pair throughout the school year.

### Talking Points Exercise

Time of Year	Mentor	Mentee
Early fall	Making friends on campus – Early networking	Ask about how first-year classes are related to career choice
Late spring	Summer plans – Aligning internships and summer jobs with career interests	Ask about how mentor used summers for career preparation

## Step 6: Encourage contact after program ends

When your program year is coming to a close, it is important to remind mentors and mentees that their relationship can extend informally beyond the program. Encourage them to schedule a check-in a few months out and for the mentees to maintain the relationship with their mentor, so that they can ask them questions about careers and internships as the time grows closer for them to get involved in those opportunities.

Source: Adapted from material shared by Harvard University.



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